

HISTORIAN

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

FEBRUARY 2000

FEBRUARY HAPPENINGS

The February meeting of the Hancock County Historical Society will be held at noon on Thursday, February 17 at the Kate Lobrano House, 108 Cue Street, Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi.

Our program will be presented by Marc Stieffel whose family includes the Stieffels and Fayards, both having long been prominent in Bay Saint Louis and Waveland. He has an extensive collection of swords and other period artifacts that will be displayed at the meeting and their uses and ages will be discussed. If you have battle-related items of unknown origin, bring them and perhaps Mr. Stieffel will try to identify them.

Please call early for lunch reservations at \$6.00. Our seating capacity is sixty. Please be one of them.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

MANY RECEIVE ADVICE, FEW PROFIT BY IT. – PUBLILIUS SYRUS

Mostly I am guilty of not listening to advice, much less profiting by it. However, with that being said, I want to proffer some words of wisdom to each of you. If you want to fully enjoy your membership, please take the time to volunteer.

Charles has been overjoyed with the many people who are already taking time out to assist. It is worth the time, just to see the enthusiasm on his face when he explains the plans the society has for updating and maintaining our history.

Brehm Bell



**Buck Lumpkin, Sr.,
a descendant of the
original Lumpkin
settlers, demonstrates
the mode of travel in
rural Mississippi
circa 1910**

Photo courtesy of Buck Lumpkin, Jr.

WESTWARD TO MISSISSIPPI

The great migration from the eastern seaboard after 1817, when Mississippi was declared a state, brought many settlers to Hancock County, which included what are now Hancock, Pearl River, Harrison and Stone counties.

The following account by the late S.G. Thigpen describes the journey of the Lumpkin family from Concord, Georgia in 1824 based on interviews with the great grandson of Lumpkin's eldest daughter.

Edith Back

Jordan Lumpkin left Concord, Georgia in the fall of 1824 with his wife, three small children, two pack horses and a small dog.

Jordan Lumpkin left his old home in Georgia because it was getting too crowded with people in the section where he lived. As one of his descendants said, "People were moving to within two to three miles of him. Since he did not like to have such close neighbors he decided to go west where there was plenty of room. He had no definite place in mind to move to. He set out to keep going until he found a place to his liking."

He chose the fall of the year to hunt a new home. There was better weather in the fall, less rain, a more comfortable temperature and the creeks were less apt

to be up. He sold his place in Georgia and must have started west about October 1.

The two horses were loaded with everything the family possessed. The members of the family walked except the children, who were all small, would be given rides on the horses when they got too tired. Progress was slow. Jordan himself led the family group on foot with his shotgun on his shoulder and his faithful dog at his heels. He followed trails or paths leading west guided by the sun.

They could make only a few miles a day. Jordan killed small game for meat. They bought food for the family and horses at small stores or from farms along the way.

They would leave their camping place at daylight each morning and trudge on westward for a few hours. They would stop for an hour or so in the middle of the day for rest for themselves and the horses and to eat the noon meal. Toward the middle of the afternoon Jordan would begin to look for a suitable camping place for the night, always trying to select a place near water and where there was good grazing for his horses.

THE WINTER CAMP

After many weeks and about 500 miles of travel – no record was kept of either the time or the distance – the Lumpkin family arrived at where Sones Chapel now stands [near Gainesville] in Pearl River County, Mississippi. It was not their intention to stop there but the rains had set in and ~~the~~ Hobolochitto was up so that they could not cross it. They camped for the night by the side of the swollen stream...The water was slow in going down. On the fourth day it turned freezing cold. They had no shelter of any kind. To protect themselves from the weather Jordan walled up a small place with pine bark. He made it tight enough to keep out the cold wind. Two days later the rains started again and it became necessary to put a better roof on the cabin. He found enough sound pine bark to put a tight roof over the cabin. He used his axe, which every pioneer owned, to cut studs and

rafters from small saplings. He used pegs where we now use nails in the construction of his crude cabin.

When the high water finally receded, the cabin had been made so comfortable and they had found so much wild game in the vicinity and so much cane for the horses that they decided they had better spend the winter there.

After spending the winter in this location the Lumpkin family had come to like the area so well that they decided to settle there permanently. When Spring came Jordan got busy building a substantial two room log house. He had brought seed corn and vegetable seed with him which he planted in his new clearing. He had chosen his land well and got high production from his new field.

A SOCIAL CALL

The Lumpkins did not know where their nearest neighbors lived. It had been months since they had seen anyone. Mrs. Lumpkin took the three children and set out early one morning to the south to find their nearest neighbors. They followed trails to the west of the creek. Way up in the day they arrived at the home of a Mr. Stewart. They could not visit long with their new found neighbors as it was important that they get back home before dark.

On the way back they got lost. Night overtook them. Though they knew the husband and father would be uneasy about them, they could make no progress in the darkness. The mother selected the largest open space she could find in the growing darkness. They raked up piles of pine straw on which to sleep. There were many wolves in the woods back then. The mother cautioned the children to make no noise, not even to rustle the leaves around them and the wolves would not bother them. During the night they heard the wolves barking in the distance but they did not come near the woman and children. At daybreak the mother told Polly, the older of the two girls, to get on a high place nearby and to holler as loud as she could and that most likely her

daddy would hear her. She did as she was told, and sure enough, they had a faint answering call. In the cool of the early morning sounds travel a long distance, even miles, in the quiet woods.

SETTLING DOWN

The Lumpkin family lived in their new home for about two years without ever going to a store of any kind. They produced or killed everything they ate right at home. In the spring of 1826 they decided to try to find a store though they had very little money to spend. On the first cool spell Jordan killed six deer and started to Pass Christian with the meat and hides. He got \$12 for all of it. He bought cloth and thread and other needs with the money. He carried along a pot to boil sea water in to get salt. On this trip he was joined by a man who lived over near Caesar. He was gone from home eight days on this trip....

Reference: Thigpen, S.G., *Next Door to Heaven*, 1965, Copyright by S.G. Thigpen.

Here's another gem from Thigpen

EARLY LOGGING

"When I was a young man I could get on a log with a pike pole and scoot about on the river herding logs downstream pretty much as a man on a cow pony keeps the laggard and stray cows going along with the herd," said Bruner Johnson, born in 1869.

Logging in the fall and winter and farming in the spring and summer were the occupations of most of the able-bodied men in the area where Bruner Johnson grew up along and near Red Creek in the south part of what is now Forrest County.

In the early fall the logging would begin. Logging in the summer was not practical because worms would get into the wood and ruin the logs and also because the water in the streams would get so low that the logs would run aground in shallow places.

Bruner Johnson logged down the river in the days before there was any such thing as a crosscut saw. The big pines were cut down and then cut into

proper lengths with axes. A good man could cut 15 to 20 logs a day with an ax depending on their size.

After the logs were cut they would be hauled to the bank of the stream by the old time high wheel log carts. The high wheels with wide tires could be pulled through and over most any kind of ground. The logs would be stored along the river, or creek, banks until the water rose. They would then be rolled into the stream by the use of cant hooks and peavies to start on their way to the big mills.

Every logger had his own mark with which he marked every log he cut. The logs were floated loose down Red Creek. Two log runs, each with anywhere from 15,000 to 20,000 logs would be run into Dead Lake. All the men with logs would help in this big drive into Dead Lake. The more expert of these men would each select a high log on which to ride with his pike pole. What was called a high log was one with less density, hence lighter in weight and for that reason would float higher in the water than a more dense log which was heavier. The job of these men was to loosen logs that had been caught in jams along the river, to straighten out logs that had become crossways in the stream, to push logs along that had gotten caught or wedged in narrow curves of the small creek or had otherwise become snared and were not freely floating downstream. This work of keeping the stray logs moving was dangerous work that required great skill.

The logs that brought the best prices were the ones that would measure 16 inches or more at the tip so as to be squared to at least 12 inches and would measure 50 to 80 feet long. These big pieces of timber were used as masts or spars for ships. Smaller logs or large short logs were not nearly so valuable.

After the logs got into Dead Lake they would be bound into rafts of 20 logs each with three binders into the logs where holes had been bored for that purpose. These rafts would then be floated out into the Pascagoula River where about 300 logs would be bound in a circle. In a log run down the river there would be many of these circles. One of the high rafts would be used to erect a tent in which to keep supplies and to cook and eat.

The circles would be floated down to the mouth of Dog River where it flows into the Pascagoula and then be pulled by a tug up Dog River to the big Dantzer sawmill at Moss Point. The trip from home to the mill was more than 75 miles the way they had to go and took many days time. The men made their way back home on foot and in rowboats. As they left on the log run, an ox team would leave about the same time to reach Moss Point about the time the logs reached there to be on hand to load the equipment and supplies to be returned home.

Mr. Johnson logged down the river until about 1910 when the big mills began to be located on the railroad and began to run logging railroads into the woods....

Editor's note: This process described by Thigpen was widespread throughout the region, including the coastal counties.

FORT PIKE

Those of us who have driven old U. S. 90 to New Orleans have often seen and wondered about the vast brick ruin at the Rigolets.

Fort Pike was built between 1820 and 1824 as a back-door protection for New Orleans and is actually within the city limits of New Orleans. A garrison was maintained at the Fort and the mail link stopped there with the mail as it was almost impossible to reach it by land.

The postmaster in 1860 was William Bosworth, who was quite probably the sutler of the post. Bosworth's meager compensation of \$12.27 for services between September 5th, 1859 and May 21, 1860 indicates that not much business was transacted.

A single cover postmarked "Fort Pike, Louisiana" in manuscript and addressed to Lt. (afterwards General) P. G. Beauregard is in the Library of Tulane University, New Orleans. A cover addressed to Fort Pike is in the collection of the authors.

Today Fort Pike is in ruins, its casements damp and empty, its cannon long since removed, but near a ramp leading to the upper works may still be seen the sutler's store, the forgotten post office of a forgotten era.

Reference: "The Great Mail - a Postal History of New Orleans" by Leonard V. Huber & Clarence A. Wagner - 1849

VOLUNTEERS RESPOND

Our request in *The Historian* for volunteers last month received a great response. During the month of January 21 people worked a combined total of 302 hours.

Helpers are welcome at any time but Mondays and Thursdays are the best times, especially for first-timers who may need more directions. We are mostly re-making file folders and arranging the material within them in date order.

Please come when you have a free moment. We need you.

New Members

John Bordages, Jr., Bay Saint Louis
Holly Purvis, Bay Saint Louis
George Hero, III, Belle Chasse, LA
Dannie Hero, Belle Chasse, LA
Dorothy Kersanac, Bay Saint Louis
Joy Monti, Metairie, LA
Lisa Wilbourn, Diamondhead
William A. Bourdreaux, Sr., BSL
Jane Boudreaux, Bay Saint Louis

LOBRANO HOUSE HOURS

MONDAY	8 a.m.
through	to
FRIDAY	4 p.m.

THE

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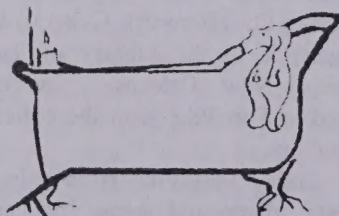
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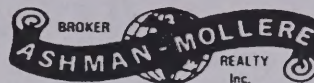
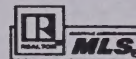
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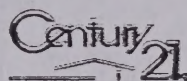
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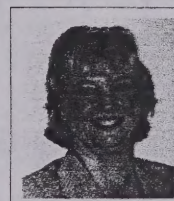
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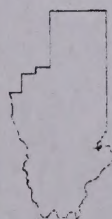
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From the Stone Age to the Space Age



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